1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

131 Islands and finds its continuation in the islands off the west
133 coast of Sumatra[1].

On the west the Andamans are separated from the coast of Madras, 700 miles distant, by the Sea of Bengal. On the east the Andaman Sea, a depression with a depth of over 1000 fathoms, separates the Andamans and Nicobars from the Malay Isthmus and Peninsula. Across the Andaman Sea, less than 100 miles distant from the Andamans, there runs a line of volcanic activity, marked by two small islands, Barren Island in Lat. 12° 15′ N. and Long. 93° 50′ E., and Narkondam in Lat. 13° 26′ N. and Long. 95° 15′ E.[2]

The Cocos, the Andamans and the Nicobars are now part of the Indian Empire. The Cocos Islands are occupied by a station for wireless telegraphy. In the Andaman Islands there is a penal settlement at Port Blair, to which are sent the criminals of India and Burma. The Nicobars are treated as one with the Andamans for administrative purposes.

•144 Until the nineteenth century the Cocos Islands were uninhabited. The Andamans and the Nicobars have for many centuries been inhabited by two entirely different races. The Andamanese belong to that branch of the human species known to anthropologists as the Negrito race. They are short of stature with black skins and frizzy hair. The Nicobarese, on the other hand, resemble the races of Indo-China and Malaya, and have brown skins and lank hair, and are of medium stature.

131 The Andaman Islands consist of the Great Andaman and
133 the Little Andaman, and a number of smaller islands. The Great Andaman may be regarded as one island, although it is divided by narrow sea water creeks into four areas, often spoken of as separate islands and called North Andaman,

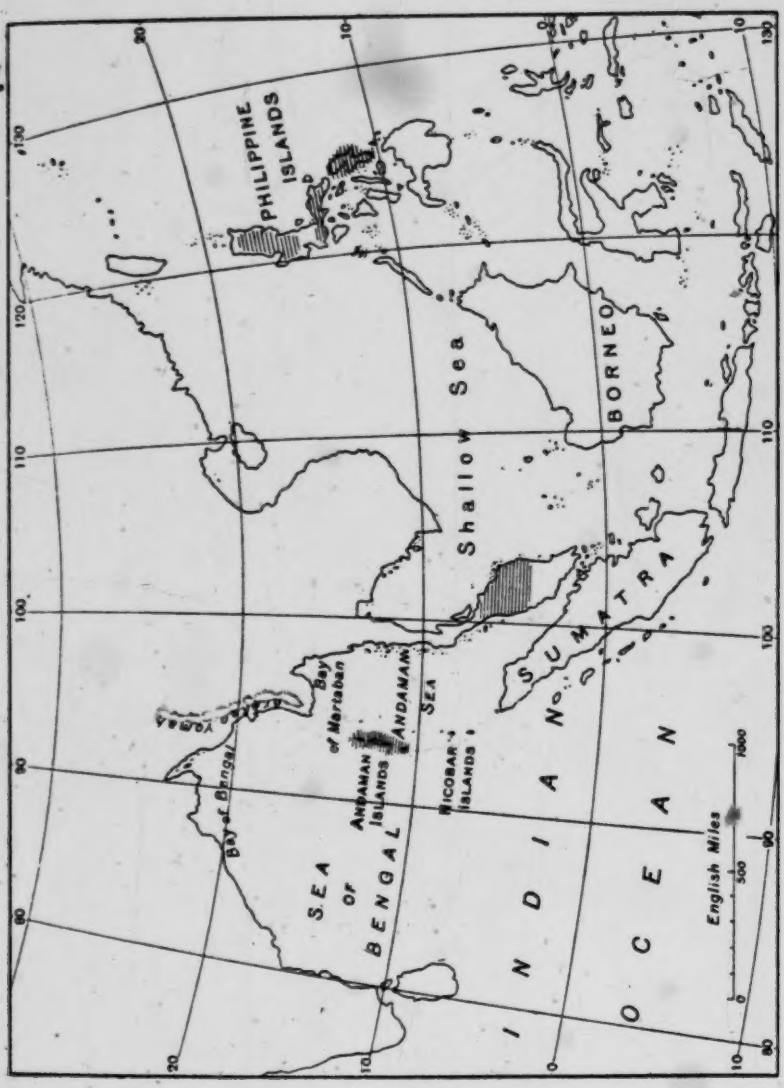
[1] The formation of the Arakan Fold (including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands), dates from the middle of the Tertiary Period, and was apparently connected with the great movements that produced the Himalaya-Alpine mountain system and the Circum-Pacific Fold. The Andaman Sea, in the later Tertiary period, was prolonged much further to the north, over the region now occupied by the Pegu Yomah.

[2] This line of volcanic activity is a minor continuation of the Sunda Range of volcanoes of Java and Sumatra. It is continued northward, parallel to the Arakan Fold, as far as the extinct volcano of Puppadoung, east of Pagan, not far from Lat. 21°.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

MAP I

174
144



South-eastern Asia, showing the present distribution of the Negrito Race

[facing p. 6]

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
.AZ2 Andamans AZ2

stretch of the Andaman Sea. The balance of probability is in favour of the view that the Andamans were peopled, either by sea or by land, from the region of Lower Burma.

Of the Negrito race, to which the Andamanese belong, there are two other branches still in existence. The first of these consists of the people who may be conveniently spoken of as the Semang, inhabiting the interior of the Malay Peninsula between 5° and 7° N. Latitude. The other branch of this primitive race is found in the interior of the Philippine Islands. From their present distribution it is clear that the Negritos must at some long past time have wandered over a wide area in south-eastern Asia. The connection between the Andamanese and the Semang can only have been either through Sumatra and the Nicobars, or, more probably, by way of Lower Burma. Communication between the Malay Peninsula and the Philippine Islands must have been either by way of Borneo or Celebes, or else by way of Annam and Cochin China. It is certainly many centuries, and probably many thousands of years, since the three surviving branches of the race were cut off from all communication with each other[1].

In the Malay Peninsula and in the Philippines the Negritos have for a long time been living in contact with other races. They have been driven back from the coasts and fertile valleys into the less accessible districts. There is ample evidence that they have adopted many of the customs of the races around them, and have even adopted to a great extent the language of their alien neighbours. The original Negrito culture and language and even perhaps the original physical type have been modified in these two branches of the race.

In the case of the Andaman Islanders it is possible that they have been entirely isolated in their island home, and have not been affected by contact with other races, but have been free to develop their own culture in adaptation to their own environment. If a hypothesis to this effect were accepted we should see in the Andamanese the direct descendants, in physical character, in language, and in culture, of the original Negrito race.

[1] On the accompanying map of south-eastern Asia the regions now occupied by the Negritos are shown by the shading.

2;Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

101 In the records of certain Arabian travellers of the ninth century we appear to find the first mention that is made of these islands being inhabited by negritos, and Marco Polo, some four hundred years later, bears out their statement, while it would seem that the islands themselves were known to Ptolemy, who speaks of a group in the Bay of Bengal as *Insulae bonae fortunae.*

As regards the derivation of the name "Andaman," there seems to be some uncertainty. Colonel Yule, in his well known work on Marco Polo, mentions that, to his knowledge, Nicolo Conti, who calls it the "Island of Gold," is the only person who has attempted to give it a meaning. Colonel Yule's suggestion is that Angamanain (the name used by Marco Polo) is an Arabic (oblique) dual indicating "The Two Andamans," viz., The Great and The Little, while the origin of the name (Angaman) may be traced to Ptolemy's reference to these islands, which he describes as those of *Good Fortune*, Ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος, whence may have sprung the forms Agdaman, Angaman, and ultimately Andaman.

144 With regard to the origin of the race, many conflicting opinions have, from time to time, been entertained; but, from the knowledge we now possess, the questions raised on the following points may, I think, be considered as more or less satisfactorily set at rest, viz.:—

I. That they are Negritos, *not* Papuans.[1]

II. That they are the original inhabitants, whose occupancy dates from pre-historic times; and that racial affinity—if there be any—may possibly some day be found to exist between them and the Semangs of the Malayan Peninsula,[2] or the Aëtas of the Philippine Islands.[3]

III. That all the tribes, as at present known to us, undoubtedly belong to the same race, and are of unmixed origin, the differences which occur among them being attributable as much to their constitutional peculiarities of jealousy and distrust in all dealings with strangers as to the natural barriers

[1] Figuier speaks of them as "pure Papuans, whose isolated position has kept them from intermixture with other races."

[2] *Vide* Wallace's "Malay Archipelago," 2nd Ed., vol. ii, pp. 278-79, and "Journ. Indian Archipelago," vol. iv, p. 427.

[3] If similarity of moral and social characteristics afforded a sufficient basis in ethnological researches among races not otherwise widely distinguished, a theory of affinity between the extinct negroid race of Tasmanians and the Andamanese might be regarded as not altogether untenable, for the descriptions given of the former by some writers are found applicable in many particulars to the race under consideration; notably is this the case in the account given by Mr. J. E. Calder, which I have deemed of sufficient interest in this connection to make a somewhat lengthy extract, and this will form the subject of one of the Appendices. (*Vide* Appendix D.)

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

presented by their densely wooded and hilly country, which facts have combined to isolate the various communities, and to check freedom of intercourse among them; further, in the case of Little Andaman, it may fairly be assumed that the peculiar bee-hive form of their huts, as well as certain modifications of their domestic habits and customs, have been borrowed from their neighbours, the Car Nicobarese, upon whom, in the last century, they made some hostile raids.

IV. That, in spite of all our endeavours to protect them, contact with civilisation has been marked with the usual lamentable result of reducing the aboriginal population; indeed, the death-rate, among those within the area of our influence, during the past twenty years has so far exceeded the birth-rate, as to compel the belief that before many decades have passed, the race, at least that portion of it which inhabits Great Andaman, will be well-nigh extinct.

In view of their probable early extermination, and the rapidity with which they are being meantime reduced to the standard of civilised manners, it seems very desirable that, ere it be too late, all possible information respecting their habits, customs, physical characteristics, etc., should be obtained, more especially as many of the errors which, excusably enough, found their way into the early accounts, having been allowed to pass unchallenged, are accepted as trustworthy, and false ethnological theories are built on these most imperfect bases.

Almost all accounts which have been written regarding these islanders speak of them as *Mincopies*, in explanation of which it is asserted that it is thus "these people style themselves;" but this is far from being the case, for not only is the name, or any at all resembling it, unknown to the *bō̤jig-ngī̤ji-*,[1] *i.e.*, the inhabitants of South Andaman, but the other six tribes with which we are acquainted are in a like state of ignorance as to its origin and significance. The only sounds at all approximating it in the South Andaman dialect at the present day being *min kaich!* (come here!) and *kâ·min kâ·pi!* (stand here!). The former of these being in common use may have given rise to the term (*Mincopie*) as a nickname, to which, indeed, it may possibly have borne a more striking similarity of sound in the language spoken at the period when this name was first adopted; for each generation cannot fail to produce changes more remarkable, and even of greater importance in the phonology of an unwritten language, such as this, depending as

[1] For the list of symbols adopted for denoting the sounds in this language *see* Appendix A; this list has been finally adopted in accordance with the kind advice of Mr. A. J. Ellis, F.R.S., whose valuable assistance I would here again gratefully acknowledge.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

141 hardly sufficient to admit of the inference, which might be drawn from the passage just quoted, and on which the incorrect theory might be based, as to their being of mixed descent. I would add that I observed, like Dr. Brander, that these differences are more noticeable among the males than among the females of the population.

144 847 **Crosses.**—1. In a footnote to his interesting paper on the Andamanese, Dr. Day mentions that "some have entirely smooth hair," and he suggests the probability of a portion of the race being of African origin or of mixed African descent.

2. With the exception of three children of mixed parentage,[1] none of whom survived more than seven or eight years, no examples are known of the existence of a cross-breed among these tribes; and, as none but these three children have been known to have had other than the frizzly hair which is one of the distinctive characteristics of the race, I have no doubt that Dr. Day either observed, or was informed of, the peculiarity occurring in their case, and his remarks must, therefore, be taken as applying only to them.

3. Not only would it have been impossible for us to have continued so long in ignorance of the existence of any individuals of this race who differed so widely from their fellow countrymen as to have smooth hair, but additional evidence is afforded by the denial of the Andamanese to every inquiry instituted on this point.

4. Another statement has been published which is also calculated to mislead; it is as follows:—"I agree with Mr. F. Day that the chief of Rutland Island is probably a native of India."[2] The chief here referred to, by name *maia .bī·cla*, but generally called by us *mūnshī .bī·cla*[3] (*vide* Plate II, fig. 2), was one of the best known, as he certainly was the most useful of all our aboriginal acquaintances. He was not only a thorough, though superior, specimen of the race, but his parents were so well known to be of pure Andamanese blood that his intimates were surprised to learn that a doubt regarding the purity of his descent should even for a moment have been entertained, and certainly I, and others who have for many years been associated with the man and his friends, see no grounds for regarding their statements on this point with the least suspicion.

5. Judging from the exceptional cases above mentioned of a cross breed occurring among them, it seems improbable that the existence of a mixed race in their midst would be tolerated, for all three of the children met their death by violence or neglect,

[1] Hindoo fathers and Andamanese mothers.
[2] Dr. Dobson.
[3] He died of measles in April, 1877.

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

not at the hands of their mothers, but of the male members of the tribe.

Reproduction.—1. Marriages never take place till both parties have attained maturity, and generally not till a few years later; the usual age of the bridegroom varies from 18 to 22, and of the bride from 16 to 20. The result of inquiries tends to show that there is a slight predominance of female over male births; three or four is the average number of children born of the same parents. The largest family known consisted of six, three only of whom attained maturity.[1]

2. Twins are rare, and as no instance can be recalled of both surviving infancy, notwithstanding all possible care being bestowed on them, they are not favourably regarded. No case of triplets has been known to occur. Births out of wedlock are considered discreditable, and in the one known instance of the kind, the parents were married immediately after the event; no difference was made in the treatment which the child received.[2]

3. The limited fecundity of the women may in some measure be due to the circumstance that they never wean their babies, so long as they are able to suckle them, and it not unfrequently happens that the two youngest children are seen together at their mother's breast.[3]

4. The ill success in rearing their offspring is doubtless owing in most part to the injudicious management and petting which each of the mother's friends considers right to bestow on the infant. It is looked upon as a compliment for every woman who may be nursing, to relieve the mother of this duty at frequent intervals; it is, therefore, no matter of surprise that the little one ails and dies.

5. The proportion of deaths from violence and accident, is believed to amount to four or five per cent.

6. Barrenness is rare, as are also cases of stillborn children. No drugs or other contrivances are employed in order to increase or limit reproduction.

Abnormalities.—1. Excessive development of fat about the gluteal region is frequently observable among the adult women.

[1] It is said that more children are born during the rains than at any other season of the year.

[2] *Vide post* "Marriage," paragraph 4.

[3] On this subject Dr. Brander remarks as follows:—

"They mostly possess considerable mammary development, and the glands in many cases seem to be in a chronic state of functional activity. This may be due to the late period to which they suckle their young (even to three or four years), or to another purpose to which the milk is applied. . . ." (*vide post*, "Sharing.") [As will be seen from Plate II. fig. 1, the mammæ are pyriform rather than spherical: with the advance of years they become flaccid and elongated.]

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

CHAPTER III.

ETHNOGRAPHY.

I. The Race.—The Affinities of the Race—Its Antiquity—Early Descriptions—The Charge of Cannibalism—The Language of the Aka-Beada Tribe used in the Report—The Twelve Tribes—Their Division into Three Groups—The Distinctions between the Groups—The Long-shore and Jungle Andamanese—The Former Isolation of the Tribes—Their Sympathies and Antipathies—Fighting Capacity—The Hostile Jarawas—Colebrooke's Knowledge of them (1789)—Explanation of the Name Mincopie for the Andamanese—Relations with the English—Jarawa Raids.

II. Physical Characteristics.—Portman and Molesworth's enquiries—Man's enquiries—High Temperature—Breathing—Age—Reproduction—Endurance—Food—Skin—Hair—Bodily Parts—Diseases—Medicine—Appearance.

III. Mental Characteristics.—Sense Development—Character—Mental Capacities—Social Emotions—General Capacities.

IV. Habits and Customs.—Dwellings—Government—Religion—Superstitions—Mythology—Initiatory Ceremonies—Amusements—Music—Song—Games—Naming of Children and Adults—Marriage Relations—Death Ceremonies.

V. Arts.—Stone Implements—Weapons—Domestic Arts—String and Netting—Weaving—Pottery—Wool and Cane work—Ornamentation, Personal and Domestic.

I. The Race.

The Affinities of the Race.—The Andaman Islands, so near to countries that have for ages attained a considerable civilisation and have been the seat of important empires, and close to the track of a great commerce which has gone on for at least 2,000 years, continue to our day the abode of savages as low in civilisation as almost any known upon earth, though close observation of them discloses the immense distance between them and the highest of the brute beasts in mental development, one most notable fact being that they eat nothing raw, cooking all their food however slightly and making pots for the purpose, and this from time immemorial. 144

As to what general variety of the existing human beings the Andamanese belong, it can be clearly predicated of them that their various tribes belong to one people, speaking varieties of one fundamental language, and that they are Negritos. Many theories have been advanced as to their affinities; the most credible being that they are connected with the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula and the Aetas of the Philippines, and the silliest, though not the least persistent, that they are descendants of shipwrecked cargoes of African slaves. On the whole the safest thing to say about them is that they are probably the relics of a bygone Negrito race, now represented by themselves, the Semangs, and the Aetas, that in very ancient times occupied the south-eastern portion of the Asiatic continent and its outlying islands before the irruptions of the oldest of the peoples, whose existence or traces can now be found there. In this view the Andamanese are of extreme interest as preserving, owing to an indefinite number of centuries of complete isolation, in their persons and customs the last pure remnant of the oldest kind of man in existence. The possibility of their representing the archaic type of the Negrito and the consequent extreme ethnological interest they arouse was long since pointed out by Sir W. Flower.

It is to be noted however that Professor Owen considered them to be not connected on anatomical grounds with the people of any existing continent. A notice of the points on which Semangs and Andamanese agree and differ will be found in Appendix A.

The antiquity of the Andamanese on their present site is proved by their kitchen-middens, rising from 12 to 15 feet and more in height, and in some cases having fossilised shells at the base. As has been already noted, the kitchen-middens show that the Andamanese now gets his food just as he did in the days when the now fossil shells contained living organisms. 172

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2 Nicobars AZ7

The blood group distribution of 39 such invalids is as follows :—

	O	A	B	AB	Total
	34	1	4	0	39
%	87·18	2·56	10·26	0	

When this is compared with the normal unaffected sample the following figure is obtained :—

	O	A	B	AB	Total
	83	4	10	0	97
%	85·57	4·12	10·31	0	

There is thus no significant difference between the affected and normal samples.

Negrito Affinities

While nothing definite can be said of the Jarawas, the other two Negrito groups, the Onges and the Andamanese, show very high incidence of the blood group A. This is accompanied by a very low O in both the cases. In breeding in such isolated populations of small size is normally very high and this has possibly resulted in the dominant A mendelising over the recessive O. It appears that the Negritos, here and elsewhere, possess a high frequency of A with little B, which is probably due to intermixture. This will be apparent from the following table :—

	O	A	B	AB	Investigator
	%	%	%	%	
Negrito (Philippines) (297)	48·4	33·3	14·1	4·0	Grove
Bushmen (615) . .	56·1	29·6	7·5	6·8	Pijper
Onges (34) . . .	14·71	67·65	5·88	11·76	Author
Andamanese (22) . .	9·9	59·09	22·71	9·09	Author

Among the Andamanese proper, the half breeds form probably one half of the population and the high B of 22·72 per cent must be due to mixture with outside peoples. The Onges are more isolated than the Andamanese and it is difficult to account for the 5·88 per cent of B among them. The percentage of AB is also high enough to warrant the presence of more B.

A 114 Gates (1948) is of opinion that: "The blood groups of Negritos and Australoids must have been very different then, as they are now, the former being high in B, the latter having A without B".

Earlier Negrito data from other sources, as also the results of this investigation, do not support the above contention. Both the Australoids and the Negritos have been found to be high in A. The Negrito peoples of the Andaman Islands, although they are now isolated in the different islands, probably all belong to the same ethnic stock and when their blood group data are pooled together the following percentages are obtained :—

		O	A	B	AB	Total
Total Negritos*(Andaman Islands)		13	36	7	6	62
	%	20·97	58·07	11·29	9·67	

A 143 144 A [162] The total number of 62 consists of 34 Onges from Little Andaman, 22 Andamanese, 6 Jarawas. When the 22 Andamanese, who are definitely known to be mixed, are exempted from the above total, the position is as follows :—

O	A	B	AB	Total
11	23	2	4	40
% 27·50	57·50	5·00	10·00	

It thus appears that more than half the Negrito population belong to group A and their similarity with the Australians in this respect, associated with the enormous differences in physical features between the two, still remains to be satisfactorily explained.

Nicobarese Blood Groups

N 144 143 [174] 000 The Nicobarese blood groups present a picture so far unknown to S.-E. Asia. The high frequency of O is characteristic of the American Indians. The Nicobarese are believed to have migrated into their present habitat from Lower Burma. Little is known of blood group distribution from Burma. Mollison and Reddy (1946) have published a set of data from 229 peoples, comprising 155 pure Burmans, 57 Karens, 13 Chins and 4 Kachins. They show the following blood group distribution :—

O	A	B	AB
36·2	26·2	29·7	7·9

* Chaudhuri's sample of 5 Onges (Gates, 1940) could not be combined with the present author's sample lest the same person is included in both the data. There are chances of such duplication in small populations as such.

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2 Nicobars AZ7 Maori OZ4

The Nicobarese values thus differ widely from the above. It will not be out of place here to mention of Eickstedt's samples from Upper Burma (Steffan, 1932) which gives 60% of O and 40% of B and stands somewhat closer to the Nicobarese data than the above figures of Mollison and Reddy.

In spite of the close cultural affinities of the Nicobarese with those of Malaya and Indo-China, in respect of their aversion to milk, the outrigger canoe, artificial deformation of head, the Malayan form of sniffing cheeks (Malay kiss), etc., the Nicobarese have so far remained ignorant of agricultu re. It appears, therefore, that the Nicobarese migrated from a habitat where agriculture was unknown and it is among such peoples that their close congeners could be found.

Negritos, Australians and Polynesians

The above three ethnic stocks, though widely varying in physical features have in common the high element of blood group A. It remains to be seen how they stand in respect of the sub-groups of A and the MN factors. So far only the Australians have been subjected to the study of MN factors (Birdsell and Boyd, 1940).

The similarity of the above three peoples in respect of the blood groups was pointed out to some extent by Howells (1934) and as such Gates' statement (p. 28) is probably unjustified. The percentages of B come to 14·1 in the case of Negritos of the Philippines (Grove, 1926), to 5·00 in the case of those from the Andaman Islands and to 2·2 in the case of the Hawaiians* (Nigg, 1930). Samoa with its fairly large content of B of 19·4% (Shapiro, 1940) is already a problem. The paucity of B among the Australians is already well-known. All these appear to show that B is a later instrusion in this area and A was predominant among the Negritos and the Australoids as it is now. The Polynesian movements began towards the dawn of Christian era from Indonesia when B did not probably reach there. This might have influenced the Nicobarese as well and the 3·68% of A may be Polynesian in origin.

* Time is ripe enough for discarding Phillips Maori data by now (see Shapiro, Howells, Graydon and Simmons, and Godley). They are compared with the recent data below :—

O	A	B	AB	
47·5%	39·5%	1·0%	12·0%	(Phillips, 1931 n=200)
41·2%	58·1%	0·7%	0	(Graydon & Simmons, 1945 ; n=267)
45·26%	48·74%	4·07%	1·91%	(Godley, 1946-47 ; n=835)
44·27%	52·06%	1·57%	1·20%	(Paddock, 1946 ; n=1335)

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Nicobars AZ7
Maori OZ4

000 It will be thus futile to argue that the Negritos, who by race and culture, appear undoubtedly to be the oldest inhabitants of this area, were strong in B, unless we assume that B is lost. At least that will be similar to the supposition of Phillips who contented that the Morioris, the ancestor of the present Maoris, belonged to group B.

Summary

N A 143 (1) 34 Onges grouped from the island of Little Andaman show the following distribution :—

O—14·71%, A—67·65%, B—5·88% and AB—11·76%.

(2) 22 Andamanese show the following distribution :—

O—9·09%, A—59·09%, B—22·72% and AB—9·09%.

(3) 4 Jarawa children were all found to belong to group O.

(4) 136 Nicobarese belong to the following groups :—

N A O—86·03%, A—3·68%, B—10·29%.

(5) Negrito affinities are discussed. Nicobarese blood groups show the highest O in India and Indonesia. Polynesian elements are probably evidenced by the presence of A.

(6) The Negritos, the Australians and the Polynesians all have high A and the B as seen in Samoa or Melanesia probably reached these islands after the Polynesian movements began in the dawn of Christian era.

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10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[P 51]

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE

101 144 563

The study of the people of the Andamans is rendered extremely interesting by virtue of the great diversities in the types of population. Obviously for the islands like the Andamans the diversities of population are far out of proportion. The islands remained as an abode of the aborigines, the negritoes, in complete seclusion and the only outside interference that had tampered the islands were the occasional raids by the sea pirates from Malaya. The beliefs about the occasional exchanges of commodities and ideas of the pirates with the Andamanese and the trade of the Andamanese for being sold as slaves in the courts of Siam and Cambodia are still now questions of doubt. However, it was only at the end of the 18th century, with the attempt of the formation of settlements and later on, of the penal settlement, that there began an influx of foreign peoples, mainly from the different parts of the mainland of India. With the formation of the penal colony, convicts were brought over to the islands in numbers and also a few attempts of free colonisation by some people from Burma and India were made. The convicts who were from the different parts of India and the free colonizors who were diverse enough in their social and cultural traits gave a character of heterogeneity to the islands. It was only after the attainment of the independence that the settlement of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is taking place in the Andamans. This is going to add further to the cultural diversity of the islands. This scheme of colonisation of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is the first attempt of some importance for the permanent colonization in the islands.

[114] 563 167 144 101

Such a variety in the types of people, can be broadly divided into three groups.

144 563 101

(a) The aboriginal population.
(b) The Later Settlers, and
(c) The New Settlers.

174

The aboriginal population belongs to the negrito stock and therefore, has an affinity with the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon and the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia. Some attribute the origin of these aborigines to the settlement of some Portuguese negro slaves who had survived by coming to these islands after a ship-

101 [144]

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

CHAPTER IX

ABORIGINAL POPULATION

144 As said earlier, the aboriginal population of the Andamans belong to the negrito group which is spread over the different parts of Southeast Asia e.g. the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon, the Tapiro of New Guinea etc. The pygmies of the Equatorial Africa also show very close resemblance to the negritoes in physical as well as cultural characteristics but the latter are taller, much more dark skinned and also hairy than the former. In spite of the racial affinity with the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia, the Andamanese show a remarkable degree of purity, an outcome of the virtual seclusion and little contact with the other people. But the infiltration of the later settlers have proved a long way to bring about some changes in them. The comparison of the Andamanese with the other negritoes will prove that a good deal of evolution of the Andamanese has been attained by them independently.

Affinity with the other Negritoes of Southeast Asia

171 Though the fundamantals of the economy of the Andamanese do not differ appreciably from the Semangs and the other groups, some characteristic features distinguish these people from the others. The Andamanese follows a long series of food privations which is absent among the Semangs and the equipments are also more elaborate than [50] the other negritoes. The outrigger canoes of the Andamanese are more improved, the bows are of complicated S-form and the huts are considerable improvements of the rudimentary temporary camps original to the negritoes. These indicate a definite improvement of the material culture of the Andamanese over the others.

The affinity of the Andamanese with the other negrito groups i.e. the Semangs of the Malaya Peninsula and the Aetas of the Philippines can very well be traced from the study of the equipments of material culture and also from the general habits and the methods of life.

171 As regards the equipments, the bow, the arrow, the mode of erecting 411 shelter and its shape show further improvements in their constuction though the prevalence of the original simple types can be detected in some parts. The original one curvature bow has considerably evolved and has developed into the S-shaped bow in the Andamans though the

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Arioto

in the local language, as opposed to the people of the interior, the *Eremtaga* – appear to have numbered between six and eight thousand. Over the years their place has been taken by more than thirteen thousand foreigners, most of whom were deportees, enjoying relative liberty as servants of government officials, farmers and foresters. The settlers, voluntarily or involuntarily, introduced the islanders to alcohol and tobacco, forcing them to turn to the foreigners in order to satisfy their craving. In the famous and extremely frank work of the English explorer M. V. Portman (*A History of our Relations with the Andamanese*, Calcutta, 1899) official letters are reproduced which give precise instructions in the matter to government officials. The result of these instructions was to transform the Arioto into alcohol and tobacco addicts. Syphilis was passed to the native women by the deportees, and from them to their men. When, a few years after the mass importation of prisoners, the government authorities became aware of the infection among the Arioto, not one of them had escaped. The miserable twenty-three survivors of the eight to nine thousand of a century ago show the ultimate result only too well, and their final extinction is imminent.

Before the advent of the new civilization, the Arioto had divided up into at least ten distinct communities, but without any true tribal organization. They respected a form of chief, chosen by tacit consent for his personal qualities rather than by name or by birth-right; but the chiefs acted merely as paternal advisers, to be respected in times of trouble, with no illusions of authority. No one commanded, and none obeyed: all were content to follow the whim of the moment, with no conception of social obligation.

When the foreigners arrived, there were five main groups of Arioto on North Andaman, the Cari, Chede, Cora, Jeru and Tabo. Another five groups were in South Andaman, the Balawa, Bea, Bogig-iab, Joi and Col. With the numerical decline of the Arioto, who had always been endogamous within their group, a tendency arose for the survivors to merge and inter-marry, so that the twenty-three alive today are in fact the result of the mixing of the northern and southern Arioto, and of these with Indians and Burmese. The chief of these twenty-three individuals is Loca, a name in itself an indication of this ethnic mixture. Loca means 'whiskers', and he himself has a moustache, whereas pure Negritos have no body or facial hair.

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Onges

After submitting my programme for the approval of the various Indian authorities, I finally left Calcutta in the motor vessel *Maharaja* and arrived in Port Blair on the evening of 11 December 1951.

Once arrived on Great Andaman I began to make preparations, but for some time the sea remained so rough that the crossing to Little Andaman was impossible. In order not to lose time, I went as far as Middle Andaman, where I started excavating an ancient kitchen-midden left by a group which has now disappeared.[1] Eventually, in March 1952, there began for me what was to become a fascinating if dangerous adventure, which continued for several years, in the dry seasons, and which I hope will prove to have been of some value.

Even now we know little of the anthropology of the Onges. They are Negritos, and therefore people of small stature. They are not, however, as small as the African pygmies, or Negrillos, who are the tiniest people in the world and who are in many respects very different from the Asiatic Negritos. Among the latter, individuals of over 4 feet are giants, while the normal height is substantially less.

In their somatic and cultural characteristics the Andamanese differ from all Asiatics, including their closest connections the Semang of the Malaccan peninsula and the Aetà of the Philippines. There is however some similarity between the three groups, indicating a distinctive common ancestry. The Negritos of today constitute the sole and fragmentary remains of a people who in ancient times were spread over a large part of Asia, and there is no lack of evidence to support their former presence much farther east and south, well into Oceania.

The word Negrito means 'small negro', but the name is inappropriate. It was originally given to these people because of the colour of their skin and the woolly texture of their hair. In their bodily proportions, however, as well as in the morphology of the head as a whole, and in particular the structure of the mouth, they resemble the Negroes considerably less than do African pygmies, who are in their turn quite a distinct type. The Negritos have some superficial affinity to peoples of small stature in New Guinea and Melanesia, such as the Tapiro, the Cameveca, the Cai and the Pesechem (or

[1] See page 69.

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Onges

144 Pesekem), although they are distinguished from them by profound cultural differences. These differences exist even between the three groups of Negritos. Whereas in Malacca and the Philippines they reflect the influx of superior cultures, these have had very little influence in the Andamans. For this reason the Andamanese have perforce remained more faithful to very ancient customs, and are also somatically the least altered.

[121] The study of the last remaining groups, the Onges and Jarawas, now on the point of extinction if they are not protected, is thus a matter of singular urgency and significance.

144 174 We know nothing of how the Negritos arrived in their present homes with somatic and cultural characteristics quite distinct from those of any other human type. Apart from some dubious remains excavated in Indochina we do not even have any fossil remains to show their probable original distribution. There is, however, reason to believe that they were once very widely dispersed, judging from the evidence of their presence today as isolates widely separated from each other.

No traces of them remain in the continental areas adjacent to the Andamans, apart from the Malaccan peninsula. At one time it was thought that traces of a Negrito element were to be found in the Kadir of Hindustan, revealed by the occasional presence of curly hair. I have myself visited the area, and must refute this suggestion; the people have nothing of the Negrito in their body structure, their hair is markedly longer than the Negrito and they have body hair. The kinky hair (never woolly) occasionally seen may derive from distant Negro crosses, or may be an accidental similarity. I have seen this type of curliness even in Europeans who certainly had no Negro or pygmy ancestry.

It has also been asserted, possibly with some foundation, although there are few data available, that there are traces of the Negrito among the people of New Guinea, such as the Tapiro. Although of small stature, their general characteristics would seem to relate the Tapiro more closely to the Papuans; they have yellowish skin, probably the lightest in that area, they are, again, hirsute and there is a marked absence of Negrito characteristics in the proportions of the body.

142 144 The first thing that strikes one on meeting the Onges – and indeed the Andamanese in general – is the exceptional blackness and

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Onges

softness of their skin. They have what must be among the darkest skins in the world, and in certain lights some individuals have a bluish tinge, which I have never seen in any other region. Something similar seems to have existed among the now extinct Tasmans, although they differed markedly from the Andamanese in other respects. The Onges are the only Andamanese who are not invariably intensely black, and the bluish type is rare among them. This might be attributable to contact with the nearby Nicobars, where a yellowish skin is common, in conjunction with Mongoloid features. I saw no traces, however, of such admixture; the Arioto show some sign of recent Burmese influence, but any ethnic influences on the Onges and Jarawas must have been extremely ancient, indeed before their arrival in the archipelago. In the south and south-west of Little Andaman I did find individuals markedly taller than the rest (though still small), but it is clear that outwardly at least the Onges and Jarawas still retain most of their unique somatic characteristics, which have remained unchanged for thousands of years.

The Andamanese skin is very smooth in texture, and lacks the odour characteristic of many of the African peoples. This would appear to depend on the chemical composition of the sweat, as the Andamanese never intentionally wash, although brushing against the sodden vegetation, and frequent immersion while collecting shellfish, or fishing, in some measure compensates. Curiously enough their sweat does seem to repel the local ticks, which drive Europeans mad; again, it was interesting that the Indians and Burmese of my party were variously affected by them.

Their skin is also extraordinarily elastic – I noticed that in the forest I scratched myself continually at the slightest touch against thorns or branches, whereas the Onges invariably emerged quite unscathed at the end of the trek. Their greater agility of movement will undoubtedly have been part of the answer, but it would be impossible to avoid any scratches, as they do, unless their skin 'gave' to an abnormal degree.

Another effect of this elasticity is that the women suffer no disfiguration of the skin over the abdomen after childbirth, and neither sex becomes wrinkled to any noticeable extent with age. This distinguishes them clearly from peoples with whom they have been compared – such as the Bushmen, who (possibly in part due

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Onges

Many Onges, in fact, have fine features,
and some of the women have a certain beauty and grace of movement, with a dignified walk and restrained gestures, despite their utter lack of any sense of shame. The sclera are very white, and the highly characteristic contrast between the intense black of the skin and the startling white of the eyes gives the Andamanese a ferocious appearance, which on smiling turns into a curiously childish expression (see further, p. 19). It is a curious fact that although the Onges have remarkable sight (p. 47), few of them can close each eye separately, although they are all completely ambidextrous.

In examining the child I had particularly in mind the very short stature of the pygmies both of Asia and Africa, which is regarded by some as pathological. The Andamanese have been described as Negroes who have degenerated through genetical isolation. This theory holds that they are descended from slaves who fled from the Portuguese after a shipwreck. I do not regard this as tenable. Pygmies in general, and the Andamanese in particular, are well-proportioned and physically outwardly normal. One cannot speak of dwarfism as determining their characteristics: this implies abnormal development as the result of hypophyseal disorder or thyroid imbalance. Cases of achondroplastic dwarfism are known among the pygmies of Africa, particularly where there has been mixing with Negroes, and these patients are sometimes taller than their normal kinfolk, but I found no cases among the pygmies of Asia.

One characteristic of the Bushmen which does occur among the Andamanese is steatopigia in both males and females. This is normally much more prevalent in females, and indeed before my visit to the Andamans von Eickstedt held that it was non-existent in males. I had always disagreed with this view, and was able to verify its occurrence in both males and females.

Dobson in the nineteenth century recorded in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* of London, the unusual appearance of the buttocks in the Andamanese, although he did not specifically refer to the phenomenon as steatopygia, and went only so far as to suppose it the result of an unusual accumulation of fat in the gluteal area. To him, however, must go the credit for the first observation.

His observation led scientists – in my view wrongly – to compare the Andamanese with the Bushmen. The presence of steatopygia,

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Onges

and the 'peppercorn' hair (disposed in tufts with bare areas) do indeed recall the Bushmen, but superficial resemblances are not enough to classify the two peoples as at all closely related. There is an important difference between the two in the structure and cross-section of the hair. Hairs from the Onges which were examined in Calcutta were remarkably uniform, indicating the racial purity of the people, unlike those of the Arioto, which showed considerable variation in cross-section, from the almost circular straight hair of the Mongoloid type, to the flattened, almost remiform hair of the original Negritos.

Different, too, is the shape of the head; I have never seen in the Negritos the typical Bushmen head, with the prominent occiput, and I saw no Andamanese with the pseudo-mongoloid appearance of the eyes which occurs in Bushmen.

The hands and feet are also different. Among the Kung women of the northern Kalahari in particular I saw delicate hands with very long metacarpals and a very small thumb, the elongated metacarpals displacing the thumb towards the wrist. None of the Negritos appear to have anything resembling this; their hands are always rather broad. Moreover, the feet of the male Onges are nearly always flat while those of the women tend to turn in, recalling the small peoples of Indonesia and New Guinea, but not the Bushmen.

An interesting though not congenital abnormality in the Andamanese results from the carrying of weights slung from the head from too early an age. Loads are always carried on their backs by a rope made of bark, the weight being taken on the forehead. The rope presses on the head in the region of the bregma and creates the so-called bregmatic furrow. This is more marked in females, as the women normally do most of the carrying. Even the children travel on their parents' backs, hanging like parcels, until the age of five or six when they are old enough to follow the group on their own.

The Abor, a mongoloid people of small stature in the mountains of North-West Assam, carry loads in the same way, but with no resulting head furrow. The Andamanese have softer cranial bones, and the result of load-bearing is therefore clearly visible. As it occurs in both sexes, it is often hard if not impossible to determine sex from skulls if the pelvis is absent. The long bones are not of

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attributed to scarcity of food, nor can nutrition have had any effect on the demographic decadence. Strict endogamy over thousands of years, and fragmentation into smaller and smaller groups is perhaps a more likely explanation of the situation. The last stage has now been reached; the Arioto, for instance, who numbered six hundred and twenty-five in the 1901 census, had dwindled to twenty-three in 1955. In that year there were only two young children, a boy and a girl (of different parents) and the girl, about five years old, clearly had a Burmese father. The boy, however, named Sirake and then aged about eleven, intelligent and alert, with the very blue-black skin of the Andamanese and typical hair, may well be of pure stock. He is the only hope of continuing the ancient Arioto line, but this will be impossible unless a girl of pure stock is born shortly.

This seems unlikely. With the exception of these two couples, the Arioto appear to be sterile. I have myself seen their sorrow at being deprived of children, and one of them, named Moro, of fairly pure stock, told me of his grief. He took me to his wife, also of pure Andamanese origin, and externally as normal and healthy as her husband, but deserted by the spirits of fertility. Through no fault of their own, the cause probably lies in both of them.

In all the Andamanese, fertility seems always to have increased from the age of twenty-eight and to end by the age of forty-eight – in many cases thirty-eight, although since none of them know their age, owing to the absence of any form of counting, their deceptively youthful appearance makes assessment of age extremely difficult. I met only one woman who, as far as I could estimate, had borne seven children, and of these only three were still alive in 1954; the widespread custom by which children are transferred from one family to another, even during the period of lactation, to 'share' the enjoyment of them, made all the usual means of assessing the number of births virtually impossible. In a number of childless couples whom I saw on Little Andaman, the women are under twenty-eight and there is still hope of fertility, even if it is late. This could happen in the case of the wives of the two leaders Cocheggi and Cendubài; these two men married two sisters, among the healthiest and most beautiful women on the island, Vaghèghe and Tocuaghèghe, both under twenty-two. Neither of them has ever been pregnant, although both are apparently normal and

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If we may deduce from the evidence of the middens, pottery arrived in the Andamans at the same time as the pig, bones of which appear only in the upper levels; but we know nothing of the people responsible for the introduction of either. It is, however, certain that both arrived in Great Andaman and Little Andaman together.

There are indications that Little Andaman was the first to feel the benefit of pottery, possibly introduced by a light-skinned people. There are, as I have said, significant variations of skin colour and stature among the Onges; some have markedly lighter skins than the other islanders, and one would assume that this feature entered Little Andaman from the Nicobars with the unknown people who brought with them pottery and the pig. The people as an entity have disappeared as a result of inter-marriage with the indigenous population, while pigs reverted to the wild state and flourished, even spreading from one island to another by swimming (I can vouch for this, having seen them do it).[1]

The indications are that there were migrations from Little Andaman to Great Andaman long before those from which the Jarawas derive. In certain respects they resemble the Onges, whereas the surviving Arioto appear to represent a purer stock. The Onges seem to have acquired foreign blood in relatively recent times, perhaps when pigs and pottery appeared, when the kitchen-middens of Great Andaman were already being built up by the Arioto, but before the migration northwards by which the Jarawas reached their present home. Much more intensive investigation of the middens will, however, be needed before these hypotheses can be confirmed.

At Golpahar there were within the midden five graves containing human bones, not in anatomical position, and clearly filled in with fresh earth. I was surprised to find only the long bones, skulls and jawbones; the remaining bones could not be found. This may be explained by the custom among the Arioto (still prevailing

[1] One thing is puzzling: the three remaining groups of primitive Negritos in Malacca and the Philippines have the arrow harpoon with a detachable head. This is particularly valuable in the forests against the pigs, which cannot escape into the undergrowth once they have been hit. But it is difficult to see how or why the arrow harpoon reached the Andamans, where there were at that time no large mammals. It seems necessary to postulate the former spread of the weapon with the Negritos over a very wide area and its use against a much wider range of animals.

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position by reed cords, which were to be tied in front of the snout, ending in a cord by which the skull was to be hung above the hunter's bed. No sooner said than done, and at the beginning of 1954 all the old trophies were thrown out into the forest, to be gradually replaced by the new ones. Fortunately I had collected some of the old trophies before the 'revelation'!

From the evidence of the middens it would appear that these variations in burial customs have no practical basis, and probably all derive from similar 'revelations'. Further investigations in a large series of the deposits, enabling dated comparisons to be made, would be extremely revealing.

Even allowing for these sudden alterations in established customs, it is clear that their elaboration indicates slow and hardly perceptible development over long periods of time and the middens must be dated in millennia. The hypothesis put forward by some scholars that the Andamanese are descended from negro slaves who escaped while on their way to the Portuguese colonies in India in the sixteenth or, at the earliest, fifteenth centuries, seems therefore quite untenable, in face of the abundant evidence in favour of the great antiquity of the middens and of the people who built them up.

It seems clear that during the last few thousand years, successive waves of migration have taken place over a whole area bounded on the west by the Andamans and Nicobars. All indications point to a close connection between the Andamanese and the peoples to the westward, the Negrito element remaining alone and almost untouched in the Andamans, but becoming submerged in the Nicobars into the mongoloid element of more recent origin. Even today a number of Nicobarese show signs of Negrito ancestry; short in stature, they have crinkly hair which although long is very different from the straight black hair of the mongoloid element, and their heads, noses and lips bear clear signs of Negrito ancestry.

In addition to these more general conclusions the middens also cast some light on the origin, still somewhat problematical, of the wretched Jarawas of Great Andaman. Comparisons between their middens and those of the Onges show that there were in the past communal huts on Great Andaman exactly the same as those still extant today on Little Andaman.

comparatively rapid variation and it is now difficult to establish their linguistic connections outside the Andamans, but Africa can certainly be discounted, in view of the general weight of evidence against any Negro ancestry.

Like the Onges the Jarawas are divided into endogamous groups, each with its own name, corresponding to their communal huts, and each with their own territory for the purposes of hunting, fishing and gathering food. There is little reliable information about their daily life or even their numbers; it is, however, certain and I cannot overstress this, that the Jarawas are Negrito in type,[1] with the same admixture as in the Onges.

Whoever or whatever they may be, the replacement of primitive expeditions by genuine attempts at pacification would, quite apart from the obvious humanitarian considerations involved, afford a unique opportunity for detailed study of a dying population in regeneration, and the refusal of an otherwise irrevocable progress towards final extinction.

But the problem of the Jarawas is merely one aspect of the problem of the Andamanese in general, and their connection with the Negritos both past and present. The Semang and the Aetà, as we have seen, resemble each other, and together resemble the Andamanese, in a number of essential points. Recent contacts with other influences in Malacca and the Philippines respectively have produced variations – such as the Semang use of traps and snares with which they take small animals, and also birds, which the Andamanese never touch. They have also taken to making refuges in the trees as a defence against wild animals, non-existent in the Andamans. Traps, poison, agriculture, fish-hooks, animal nets, are all late acquisitions, not found among the original Negritos. It was thought by Brown that spears, used by the Semang, were also unknown among the peoples of the Andamans, but I have myself seen them used by the Onges, though admittedly I saw only a few, and very rough specimens; I did, however, manage to bring some back with me.

In the case of the canoes, the Semang and the Aetà seem to have

[1] On 11 January 1931 a Jarawa was killed at Lekeralarta on Middle Andaman and the head is now in the Indian Museum in Calcutta. This head shows signs of beard, unlike those of two Jarawas held in the Nicobars since the September 1938 incident. Short, muscularly well-developed, strong and very black, Jarawas are normally beardless, as is usual in Negritos.

Semang ANT
Andamans A12
Oceanic Negritos 05

ON 141 be wrong to assume that the Negritos are brachycephalic. He believes that the mixed Negrito peoples are brachycephalic; the less mixed, the lower their cephalic index (proportional relation between width and length of skull) S 141 and thus, the less brachycephalic. The cephalic index of the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula is given as only 78-79; therefore, these people are not brachycephalic but mesocephalic.

A 141 [103] Although the Mincopies of the Andaman Islands have been known for quite a long time, they have as yet not been sufficiently studied from an anthropological viewpoint. /103/ However, from the few data which are available, we may assume that the average height of a man is 148.3 centimeters and 139 for the average woman. The cephalic index has been calculated to be 82.5 (in the south) and 83.0 in the north. Thus the Mincopies appear to be clearly brachycephalic, although the dolichocephalic skull is definitely not lacking A among them. Dixon, therefore, regards the Mincopies as a ● 144 mainly brachycephalic Negrito-Palae-Alpine racial element, however with a slight admixture of the dolichocephalic Proto-Negroid type (Fig. 12).

S 101 141 The Semangs, who are living in the Malay Peninsula, namely in North Perak, in Kedah, Rahman, Ranga and Kelantan, are somewhat taller than the Mincopies. Their average height has been measured to be 152.0 centimeters. (1)

1. However, Skeat and Blagden mention as average height of the Semangs 149.1 centimeters for men and 140.0 for women.